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Saigon 26058

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

LIMDIS

REF: A. SAIGON 23278
B. SAIGON 22871

1. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HA THUC KY TOLD EMBOFF MAY 17 THAT, IF FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS HONEST, HE COULD RECEIVE AS MANY AS TWO MILLION VOTES. HE EXPECTS SUPPORT FROM HIS OWN PARTY AND ITS SYMPATHIZERS

PAGE 2 RUM C O N F I D E N T I A L
IN CENTRA , SOME CATHOLICS IN SAIGON AREA,
CAO DAI I TA AND BUDDHIST SECT LED BY NGUYEN
LONG CHA

2. HA TH JO PREDICTED THAT HE WOULD DO AS WELL AS EITHER KHAC SUU OR TRAN VAN HUONG IN THE DELTA AND THAT GENERAL THIEU LIKELY TO RUN, IF ONLY TO SPITE GENERAL KY. HE SAID THAT KY AND THIEU ARE ENGAGED IN "FIGHT TO DEATH" AND APPEARED QUITE FAMILIAR WITH DETAILS SURROUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRIME MINISTERS CANDIDACY. AN EXAMPLE OF THIEU/KY RIVALRY, HE CITED PRIME MINISTERS VISIT TO AN GIANG PROVINCE ON MAY 16. EVERYWHERE HE WENT HE WAS FOLLOWED BY CA DEPUTY LE QUANG LIEM WHO DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO REVERSE ANY FAVORABLE IMPACT PRIME MINISTER MAY HAVE HAD ON LOCAL POPULATION... LIM IS A HOA HAO. SUPPORTS THIEU AND IS BITTER RIVAL OF HOA HAO LE PHUOC SANG WHO LEADS PRO-GVN BLOC IN DA...

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3. HA THUC KY IS STILL HAVING TROUBLE FINDING A RUNNING-MATE. HE HAS AGAIN APPROACHED BUDDHIST HEADER MAI THO TRUYEN BUT TRUYEN PREFERS PUT OFF

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DECISION UNTIL "AMERICANS MAKE KNOWN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS GENERALS." KY FEELS THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN, THINKS THAT RISK OF RUNNING SHOULD BE TAKEN ANYWAY AND THAT REAL REASON UNDERLYING TRUYEN'S HESITATION IS "HIS TYPICAL SOUTHERNER'S FEAR OF THE MILITARY." KY SAYS THAT IF TRUYEN DOES NOT MAKE UP HIS MIND WITHIN NEXT TWO WEEKS OR SO, HE WILL TAKE BUSINESSMAN TRAN HUU PHUONG AS HIS RUNNING-MATE. PHUONG, A SOUTHERNER AND A CATHOLIC, HELD FINANCE PORTFOLIO IN DIEM GOVERNMENT IN 1954/55, LATER SERVED BRIEFLY AS GOVERNOR OF NATIONAL BANK.

4. HA THUC KY IS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED WITH ELECTORAL LAW. REVERSING EARLIER POSITION (SEE SAIGON 23278). KY NOW SAYS HE FAVORED RUN-OFF POSITION AND WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT CA ADOPTED SINGLE-ELECTION FORMULA. HE THINKS IT IRONIC THAT CANDIDATE COULD CONCEIVABLY WIN WITH LESS THAN TEN PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE AT SAME TIME BEING OBLIGED TO FORFEIT DEPOSIT AND REIMBURSE GVN-FURNISHED CAMPAIGN FUNDS. NONETHELESS, HA THUC KY CONSIDERS THE LAW ADEQUATE, PROFESSES TO

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BE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT FORTHCOMING CAMPAIGN AND IS STILL QUITE SANGUINE ABOUT HIS CHANCES.

5. COMMENT: HA THUC KY CONSIDERABLY OVERESTIMATES HIS CHANCES. HE IS ASSURED A SAMALL BLOC OF VOTES IN NORTHERN I CORPS AND WERE HE TO HAVE A PRESTIGIOUS SOUTHERNER LIKE MAI THO TRUYEN AS A RUNNING-MATE HE MIGHT MAKE A RESPECTABLE SHOWING. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT TRUYEN IS ALSO BEING SOUGHT AS RUNNING-MATE FOR TRAN VAN HUONG. KY'S ALTERNATE CHOICE, TRAN HUU PHUONG, DOES NOT TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT FOLLOWING.

6. HA THU KY'S REMARK THAT GENERALS THIEU AND KY ARE ENGAGED IN "FIGHT TO DEATH" PROBABLY REFLECTS HIS ENCOURAGEMENT BY REPORTS THAT THE TWO GENERALS ARE AT ODDS AND HIS DESIRE TO SEE A CONTINUATION OF THE THIEU/KY RIVALRY THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD. GP-3 BUNKER
BT